

English Literature A-Level

This A-Level is an exciting opportunity to explore literature with others dedicated to the art of words. On offer is nothing less than the potential to have your world and self transformed; but be warned literature is full of sex and violence and not for the faint of heart. The examinations focus on comparison of texts and cover literature from the Renaissance to the twenty-first century. A creative response has also been introduced as part of the coursework portfolio which offers an opportunity to reflect on yourself as both a reader and writer of literature. You will be encouraged to develop your own critical positions and to make your own choices about texts for coursework modules.

The assessment of English Literature is divided between AS and A2 modules. Each module consists of coursework and an examination. During the AS course students will study two twentieth century poets and a modern drama text with the coursework consisting of two different responses to prose – a creative approach and a comparative essay. At A2 level students will explore a Shakespeare text in the light of another thematically linked play, as well as respond to unseen poetry by comparing it to poems by a prepared pre-1800 poet. The A2 coursework will be a thematic comparison of poetry, prose and drama texts. Most recently, students have explored texts ranging from Oedipus Rex, King Lear and Wuthering Heights, and read the work of John Donne, Edgar Allen Poe, Cormac McCarthy and Siri Hustvedt.

The key requirement for those studying English Literature is that they should enjoy reading, and should want to find out as much as possible about the texts and contexts that they study. Intellectual curiosity and a desire to see new perspectives are both desirable and acquired during the course. Not surprisingly, English Literature is an excellent preparation for anybody whose university subject or future career will involve analytical skills and coherent writing. However, those looking for a challenging balance to a scientific A-level curriculum will find the rigour and alternative approaches in literary study a refreshing difference. For the Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and the Advanced Level (A2), the School follows the WJEC course. This course is designed to encourage candidates to develop interest and enjoyment in literary studies through reading widely, critically and independently as well as introduce candidates to the traditions of English Literature.